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## ABSTRACT

This issue of "Network News" takes a look at emerging P-16/K-16 partnerships and data systems. The first article, "P-16 Data and Accountability Systems," by Hans L'Orange and Rick Voorhees (an adaptation of a policy brief) looks at data being used for accountability within P-16 systems and provides some general characteristics of these systems. The article also offers a closer look at data systems in both the K-12 and postsecondary environments. The next article, "Partnerships and Promising State Practices," looks at three promising state programs in this area, discussing: (1) the large data repository of Texas; (2) Florida's education data warehouse; and (3) the importance of K-16 partnerships in development areas in Maryland. An introduction is then provided to the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) project "Building Statewide K-16 Systems for Student Success." The issue concludes with a few recommended resources in this area and introductions to the Network's new data analyst and senior research analyst. (SLD)

# NETWORK NEWS

# SHEEO

Volume 22, No. 1  
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## FOCUS ON P-16 PARTNERSHIPS

### In This Issue

... *Network News* takes a look at emerging P-16/K-16 partnerships and data systems. The first article looks at data being used for accountability within P-16 systems and provides some general characteristics of these systems. The article also offers a closer look at data systems in both the K-12 and postsecondary environments. The next article looks at three promising state programs in this area; the first focuses on Texas' large data repository, the second provides an introduction to Florida's education data warehouse, and the third discusses the importance of K-16 partnerships in Maryland's development efforts. An introduction is then provided to SHEEO's project: Building Statewide K-16 Systems for Student Success. We conclude with a few additional recommended resources in this area and introductions to the Network's new data analyst and senior research analyst.

### P-16 Data and Accountability Systems

*This article is an adaptation of a SHEEO policy brief written by Hans L'Orange (Director, SHEEO/NCES Network) and Rick Voorhees (Principal, Voorhees Group) and reflects the opinions of the authors. The full article is available through the SHEEO website and was written as part of the new SHEEO publication "Student Success: Statewide P-16 Systems".*

#### Introduction

The tremendous interest in increasing the depth and breadth of educational achievement in the United States has drawn new attention to standards, data, and accountability systems. It has also engendered some heated discussions among educators and policy makers as well as parents and other stakeholders concerned with the kinds of standards, data, and accountability systems needed to help improve educational achievement.

Regardless of how these issues are resolved, it is clear that many older data systems were never designed to meet the new accountability challenges. Data systems designed for the new century are expected to do more than support routine reports or to audit expenditures. What is emerging is a need for information that is both comprehensive and focused-capable of describing achievement across multiple levels as well as reporting educational performance in particular content areas.

### The General Status of K-12 Data Systems

Increasing interest in K-12 standards and in the performance of students has reinforced state-level data collections that include student test data which became more widely used

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All states  
currently issue  
at least one  
accountability or  
indicator report  
for their  
K-12 systems  
annually,  
and 38 states  
issue more  
than one  
annual report.

*Council of Chief State  
School Officers, 2002*

87 percent of  
all postsecondary  
headcount  
enrollments are  
in states with  
one or more  
state-level unit  
record databases.

*Lumina, 2003*

*continued from previous page*

in the late 1990's. States are also addressing the accountability standards within the "No Child Left Behind Act" of 2001, which requires all schools to assess reading, mathematics, and, eventually, science in grades three through eight. The Act specifies that states develop a K-12 data system that can be used for accountability purposes.

Point-in-time assessment data can be useful in comparing performance across schools but may not be as useful for making judgments about the academic growth of individual students. Longitudinal data systems, on the other hand can be designed to track student specific academic progress by collecting a wide range of demographic and performance information at regular intervals. Such systems, typically called "unit record" systems require that definitions of individual variables be consistent over levels and over time, so that valid comparisons are possible. Finally, in addition to generating performance reports, unit record systems can be used to produce answers to higher level "what if" questions that are frequently asked in accountability discussions (e.g., what combination of high school coursework best prepares a student for postsecondary education).

All states currently issue at least one accountability or indicator report for their K-12 systems annually, and 38 states issue more than one annual report (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2002). With the exception of four, every state provides accountability statistics at the school level and all but five states provide some reporting at the state level. Many local elementary/secondary schools have collected these student achievement data for years, but not all states combine assessment data with those of other K-12 schools and systems or with data from postsecondary institutions.

### **The General Status of Postsecondary Data Systems**

Postsecondary institutions also utilize accountability systems although the purposes of such systems may be somewhat different from elementary/secondary systems. In the last decade, state policymakers have evinced a very strong interest in the productivity and efficiency of public postsecondary institutions and a recent SHEEO survey confirms that productivity and effectiveness continue as one of the top issues for state decision makers.

Productivity and effectiveness issues also suggest that postsecondary education institutions must convince the public and political leaders that the service they provide has value and deserves sufficient financial support. Over time, institution-level data systems have been developed that allow staff to analyze data, generate reports, respond to both internal and external demands, and demonstrate the value of the education being provided. These systems have become quite adept at addressing individual institutional issues, but generating the answers to state-level policymakers' questions requires definitional consistency and comprehensiveness that oftentimes may be missing across institutions and institutional systems.

Like K-12 systems, state higher education organizations and federal agencies began to establish common definitions and reporting formats allowing them to generate meaningful information at the state and national levels. Many states have developed their own statewide databases giving them even more analytical capacity. As noted in a recent Lumina sponsored report written by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), thirty-nine states currently have state unit record databases. The eleven states that do not have unit record databases are relatively small, and as a result, 87 percent of all postsecondary headcount enrollments are in states with one or more state-level unit record databases. Federal reporting standards in the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and other required federal reporting have encouraged consistency of definitions across these systems.

## Conclusions

The information available about students, states' K-12 systems, and the states' post-secondary systems is substantially greater than it was twenty years ago. However, these systems are not always linked together. Linking student data to create a valuable resource requires substantial cooperation between multiple agencies and state-level education organizations. Jonathan Tafel and Nancy Eberhart (1999), writing in "Stateside School-College (K-16) Partnerships to Improve Student Performance," note that a state's ability to collect quality data and conduct appropriate analysis is necessary for an effective K-16 education system. Robust student databases are required to monitor student progress across the K-16 continuum, facilitate early assessment for remediation, implement and assess possible intervention strategies, and locate barriers within systems.

Effective and comprehensive data systems share several common advantages. They inform stakeholders of the condition of education at various levels. They enable states to identify effective educational practices and diagnose problems. Effective data systems also have the ability to identify programs, schools, and students that are successful, as well as those that need attention and assistance.

Some states have been successful in creating coordinated or linked systems that can be used to truly assess the benefits of P-16 data systems. Three are profiled in the following article. As the use of information continues to evolve, it is expected that exemplary accountability data systems will become more prevalent and efficient. They will be designed and implemented in ways that increase the ability of policy-makers and practitioners to focus on data that are useful for decisions within an institution, within a particular educational level and ultimately across the entire spectrum of P-16 education.

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The goal is to  
"provide ready  
access to  
integrated public  
primary,  
secondary, and  
higher education  
information for  
the purposes of  
research, planning,  
policy, and  
decision-making."

Texas PK-16  
Public Education  
Information Resource

## Partnerships and Promising State Practices

States are in different stages of developing coordinated P-16 data systems, but some data are already being shared across systems. Many postsecondary systems contain admissions information, including a student's final high school grade point average. Work attempted prior to postsecondary admission in the form of transferable credits or prior college-level work is also available in certain systems. Having this information has permitted many states to develop feedback systems that allow high schools to receive information about their graduate's postsecondary performance. Communication and data sharing of this sort enables greater cooperation among school districts and postsecondary institutions regarding academic preparation and expected high school coursework. Analysis between what a student has learned in high school and what they are attempting to learn in college is a promising development in the evolution of P-16 data systems.

Several states already have programs in place that demonstrate the power of partnerships and shared data; three promising developments from Texas, Florida and Maryland are presented here.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) recently unveiled the state's new PK-16 Public Education Information Resource (TPEIR), <http://texaseducationinfo.org>. This project is a cross-agency effort building on the data and expertise of the THECB, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC). The goal of the project is to "provide ready access to integrated public primary, secondary, and higher education information for the purposes of research, planning, policy, and decision-making." Several specific objectives of the project include:

- Enhancing the analysis and reporting capabilities of both agency staff and external stakeholders;
- Supporting trend analysis, with some data from as early as 1989;
- Providing access to consistent results (everyone gets the same answers); and
- Reducing the time needed to fulfill requests for data.

Data for the repository currently come from the three partners. The data that are held in common and can most logically be linked are on students, staff, and teacher certification. THECB furnishes degree programs, courses, classes, testing results and facilities. TEA and SBEC supplement the common data with state and district data along with certification data. Texas has almost 1,200 school districts and those districts, along with the postsecondary institutions generate massive amounts of data. There are 680 million records currently loaded in this very large warehouse with the expectation of adding another 300 million records annually. Specific reports provide information about both high school and higher education graduates along with higher education admissions and enrollments. Cross agency reports detail PK-16 linkages including high school to postsecondary education progression and the sources of certified teachers.

Florida also has a new education data warehouse that addresses many of these same issues. (<http://edwapp.doe.state.fl.us/doe>) The Florida K-20 Education Data Warehouse provides information on Florida public school students from kindergarten through their post-doctoral studies, including workforce information available to the Department of Education. This is accomplished by extracting and integrating data from existing source systems including a robust P-12 data system that has been in place for more than 10 years, community colleges data systems, the university data systems, the Florida workforce development information system, and student assessment files.

The warehouse is a joint project among all the divisions of the Department of Education. The various agencies work as partners to provide the data for the warehouse. This obviously makes data sharing much more feasible and the data warehouse provides the capability of analyzing information from several sectors. The objectives and goals of the project are lofty. They include:

- Providing complete, timely, and accurate data;
- Supporting an integrated technical environment that brings in data from multiple sources and organizations;
- Merging historical data with current data in a structured repository; and
- Creating comprehensive data definitions.

While **Maryland** has not built a comprehensive data warehouse, their efforts are reported here to highlight the importance of partnerships in P-16 efforts. The Maryland Partnership for Teaching and Learning K-16 (<http://mdk16.usmd.edu>) is beginning with an alliance of the Maryland State Department of Education, the Maryland Higher Education Commission, and the University System of Maryland.

The Partnership is considering some very specific questions including: "What defines a liberal education for informed citizens in a democracy? What should college graduates know and be able to do? What should our high school students know and how will we know that they have learned it? What should our teachers know and be able to do, and how will we know they have reached the standards we expect? What can we learn from the most successful programs and practices in our state and around the country that will help us raise the achievement of all our students in reading, writing, mathematics, and citizenship skills for success?"

One component of the Maryland K-16 strategic priorities will begin linking the various state databases via a proposed Maryland Clearinghouse for Educational Statistics (MCES). The goal of MCES will be to examine how current databases can be enhanced to allow both shared access and the analysis of student information from kindergarten through careers. In addition to looking at data needs, they will recommend reporting mechanisms and the structures needed to analyze and report on the educational progress and achievement of all students.

The Maryland partners have also recognized that even though large quantities of data are collected, the information may not be accessible in a manner needed to do appropriate analysis and address the questions being asked. An emerging concept is the establishment of a Maryland Education Data Network. In this case, "network" implies linking, integrating, and making more usable the vast quantities of existing data that are stored by numerous parties in the state. Maryland currently has no plans to create a single database or warehouse managed by one agency. Instead, its early conceptual model includes a single electronic comprehensive record or portfolio that would accompany each student throughout his or her education.

Many other states have promising P-16 promises and initiatives; links to these can be found at SHEEO's K-16 Web Resources page, [www.sheeo.org/helinks/k16-links.htm](http://www.sheeo.org/helinks/k16-links.htm), or P-16 Data Systems page, [www.sheeo.org/datamgmt/p16-links.htm](http://www.sheeo.org/datamgmt/p16-links.htm).

The Warehouse  
provides  
information on  
Florida public  
school students  
from kindergarten  
through their  
post-doctoral  
studies, including  
workforce  
information.

Florida K-20 Education  
Data Warehouse

The goal will be  
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and the analysis  
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Maryland Partnership for  
Teaching and Learning K-16

## Building Statewide K-16 Systems for Student Success

The SHEEO K-16 Initiative was conceived in the summer of 2000 in discussions between SHEEO staff, the SHEEO K-16 Committee, and staff of the U.S. Department of Education. As we continued our discussions and exploration of the topic we quickly identified other colleagues working on the same agenda – improving access to and success in postsecondary education via statewide K-16 partnerships. What resulted was a partnership between SHEEO and other organizations in the policy component of the Pathways to College Project – The Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE), the Education Commission of the States (ECS), and the College Board.

Pathways to College is a consortium of organizations and associations focused on improving the participation and success of under-represented groups in higher education. The Pathways Project has received supported from four U.S. Department of Education programs – GEAR-UP; HEA Title II-Teacher Quality Enhancement; PT3-Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology; and the Office of Vocational and Adult Education.

The SHEEO Initiative included "case studies" on K-16 activities in five states (California, Louisiana, Maryland, North Carolina, and Rhode Island) organized primarily by the staff of each state's higher education agency. It also included full day discussions of K-16 issues involving educators and policy makers in Washington, Tennessee, Montana, and Indiana. In addition, the project sponsored four, two-day regional seminars to help policy makers from a dozen or so states develop strategies for improving student participation and success. More information on the Building Statewide K-16 Systems project can be found at [www.sheeo.org/k16/bsks-home.htm](http://www.sheeo.org/k16/bsks-home.htm). Strategy briefs based partly on these activities are available from that page.

More information on the Pathways Network can be found at: [www.pathwaystocollege.net](http://www.pathwaystocollege.net) and at the SHEEO web site: [www.sheeo.org/access/pathway.htm](http://www.sheeo.org/access/pathway.htm).

## Recommended Resources

### Transforming the American High School: New Directions for State and Local Policy

by Michael Cohen, Senior Fellow, The Aspen Institute, 2001.

At a time when high schools must be pathways to college for all students, they can be pathways to nowhere for some according to former Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, Michael Cohen. In "Transforming the American High School", he identifies systemic policy issues and change strategies necessary to respond to this emerging crisis – on a large scale and in the fastest possible time frame. This publication identifies policy issues and recommends change strategies necessary to respond to the current situation. "Transforming the American High School" is a joint publication of Jobs for the Future's From the Margins to the Mainstream Initiative and the Aspen Institute's Program on Education in a Changing Society.

This report can be found at:  
[www.aspeninstitute.org/aspeninstitute/files/lmg/pdf/highschools.pdf](http://www.aspeninstitute.org/aspeninstitute/files/lmg/pdf/highschools.pdf).

### Strengthening California's Teacher Information System

by Camille E. Esch, Patrick M. Shields, and Viki M. Young through the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning using research conducted by SRI International, 2002.

In many ways, teacher quality can be considered a quintessential P-16 issue. Not only are teachers responsible for ensuring that K-12 students are adequately prepared for success in postsecondary education, their quality is an outcome of these same post-

secondary education systems. National focus on the quality of America's teachers has been steadily increasing over the past several years, particularly with the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act and its included definitions and requirements concerning high-qualified teachers.

While a number of reports have been published reviewing almost all aspects of teacher quality, relatively few of them focus specifically on the status of data and data systems used for policy decisions relevant to this field. The policy brief, "Strengthening California's Teacher Information System," helps address this issue. It discusses gaps present in the current California data system and the challenges this presents for policymakers. Additionally, the brief presents suggestions about the type of data that would be most useful for policy and other decision makers and offers suggestions and special considerations for creating a data system of quality and utility.

This report can be found at:

[www.cftl.org/documents/CFTLdatabasepdf.pdf](http://www.cftl.org/documents/CFTLdatabasepdf.pdf).

### **Betraying the College Dream: How Disconnected K-12 and Postsecondary Education Systems Undermine Student Aspirations**

by Andrea Venezia, Michael W. Kirst, and Anthony L. Antonio, The Bridge Project, 2002.

Stanford University's Bridge Project, a six-year national study determined that eighty-eight percent of 8th graders expect to participate in some form of postsecondary education, and approximately 70 percent of high school graduates actually go to college within two years of graduating. This report claims that states have created "unnecessary and detrimental barriers between high school and college, barriers that are undermining these student aspirations." The current system sends students, their parents, and K-12 educators "conflicting and vague messages about what students need to know and be able to do to enter and succeed in college."

The report describes these problems further, provides a context for why they exist, and offers recommendations to improve the current situation.

The full report can be found in a PDF format at:

[www.stanford.edu/group/bridgeproject/br:betrayingthecollegedream.pdf](http://www.stanford.edu/group/bridgeproject/br:betrayingthecollegedream.pdf).

### **Building a Highway to Higher Ed: How Collaborative Efforts are Changing Education in America**

by Neil Scott Kleiman, Center for an Urban Future, 2001.

This report is a look at a yearlong investigation of educational programs by the Center for an Urban Future that reveals programming and resources that are being shared between New York City's two public elementary and secondary school systems. It states, "New York has begun to pioneer some of the most advanced and sophisticated P-16 programs in the United States."

It claims that most students are unprepared for college because high schools test for what they think students should have learned, colleges test for what they think students need to know and these are not the same things. The report also states that P-16 collaboration is about creating a smooth pathway from pre-school through college.

The report can be found at:

[www.nycfuture.org/content/reports/report\\_view.cfm?repkey=10](http://www.nycfuture.org/content/reports/report_view.cfm?repkey=10).

Additional state and national resources can be found at SHEEO's K-16 Web Resources page: [www.sheeo.org/helinks/k16-links.htm](http://www.sheeo.org/helinks/k16-links.htm).

## **New Personnel at SHEEO**

*We are pleased to welcome Tara Bisel and David Wright to SHEEO.*

Tara Bisel joined our team in January of 2003 as a Data Analyst. Her focus is data gathering and analysis on a wide variety of issues pertaining to higher education for potential policy uses. Tara also supports the SHEEO Online Access To Resources (SOAR).

Prior to SHEEO, Tara completed a semester internship with the Office of Institutional Research at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs where she also completed a Master of Arts degree in Sociology. She earned a B.A. in Psychology with a minor concentration in Sociology from the University of Kansas.

David Wright joined SHEEO and the Network in June 2003 as a Senior Research Analyst. David comes to SHEEO from the Florida Council for Education Policy, Research, and Improvement. David has a Bachelor degree in Business Administration from Harding University in Arkansas, a Master of Science degree in Higher Education from Florida State University, and is a Ph.D. candidate in Higher Education from Florida State.

In addition to his experience at the Florida Council, David brings an institutional perspective from his time as an admissions coordinator at the University of Arkansas and in institutional research at the Tallahassee Community College.

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